

PLAN CONFORMANCE/NEPA COMPLIANCE RECORD

DOI-BLM-AKF010-2013-0019-CX

A. Background

BLM Office:

Arctic Field Office, Bureau of Land Management
1150 University Avenue
Fairbanks, Alaska 99709-3844
<http://www.blm.gov/ak>

Lease/Serial/Case File No.: FF095718, 2984.01 (AK012)

Proposed Action: The applicant is planning to camp at Chipp River North, Chipp River South, and at Point Lonely. They will conduct their studies of aquatic invertebrates, least cisco, white-fronted geese, goose forage, and loons from these sites.

Date of Proposed Action: Chipp River North- May 18 to September 02, 2013/Chipp River South-May 18 to September 20, 2013/ Lonely-May 16 to August 20, 2013/Garry Creek, East Long Lake, Kidney Lake, Island Lake, Smith River, Piasuk Delta, Cape Simpson-July 15 to July 21, 2013/Up to 30 Lakes in the TLSA-July 6 to July 12, 2013.

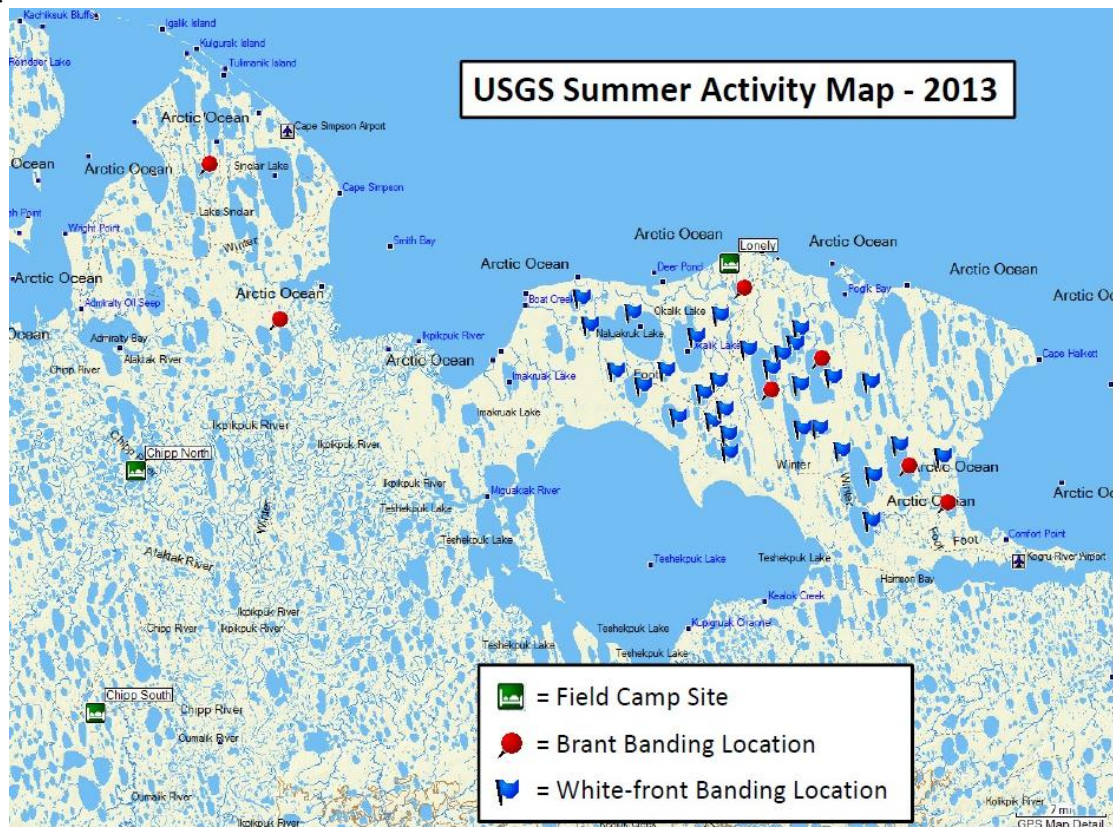
Applicant: John Pearce
Supervisory Wildlife Biologist
USGS Alaska Science Center
4210 University Drive

Location: All in Umiat Meridian

Township	Range	BLM Managed Sections
14 North	14 West	All
19North	14 West	All
17North	12 West	All
15 North	2 West	All
16 North	2 West	All
17 North	2 West	All
15 North	4 West	All
16 North	4 West	All
17 North	4 West	All
18 North	4 West	All
15 North	3 West	All
16 North	3 West	All
17 North	3 West	All
18 North	3 West	All
15 North	6 West	All
16 North	6 West	All
17 North	6 West	All
18 North	6 West	All
15 North	5 West	All
16 North	5 West	All
17 North	5 West	All
18 North	5 West	All

16 North	8 West	All
17 North	8 West	All
16 North	7 West	All
17 North	7 West	All
18 North	7 West	All

Map:



Description of Proposed Action:

The applicant John Pearce, with the USGS Alaska Science Center has requested authorization for field activity access and landing by a floatplane and helicopter, on lands within the National Petroleum Reserve Alaska (NPR-A) in support of avian research and effects of climate change.

The first camp research is near the Chipp River, about 18 km from the coast, to investigate aquatic invertebrates, least cisco, white-fronted geese, and loons. A field camp including a container van (Conex) and wooden weatherport floor will be left on site year-round for duration of study. The Conex containers are already in place at Chipp River North, Chipp River South, and Lonely. They were transported to these sites in April of 2011 (ROW Grant FF095789). Day use of areas within an 8 km radius of camp will occur from May 18 to September 20, 2013. Access to the camp will be by helicopter or floatplanes. At camp, transportation will primarily be foot travel, with some outboard motor use on a large lake by the camp.

The second research camp near the Chipp River, is about 48 km from the coast, also to investigate aquatic invertebrates, least cisco, white-fronted geese, and loons. Likewise, a container van (Conex) and wooden weatherport floor will be left on site year-round for duration of study. Day use of areas within an 8 km radius of camp will occur from May 18 to September 20. Access to

the camp would be by helicopter or floatplanes to get in and out of camp. At camp, transportation would primarily be foot travel, with some outboard motor use on a large lake by the camp.

Camp structures at each site of the above sites have a 8×20 ft Conex storage container, one temporary weatherport and up to eight small tents. No more than eight people would occupy the camps at any one time. The camps will be accessed by fixed-wing aircraft (skis or floats) and helicopter. Chipp River North will have up to 10 people for a 3-5 day period. Chipp River South will have up to 10 people for a 3-5 day period. Lonely will have 4 people in camp and 10 people during banding for 2 to 3 days. The 7 locations of Garry Creek, East Long Lake, Kidney Lake, Island Ladke, Smith River, Piasuk Delta, Cape Simpson will not have a camp but will be accessed from Lonely. The 30 Laeks in the TLSA will not have a camp but will be accessed from Lonely. A third camp is at the Lonely (Distant Early Warning) DEW Line site to investigate the effects of climate change on goose forage plant nutrient composition along the Smith River. This camp will be in use from May 16 until August 20, 2013 and access will be by fixed wing aircraft and helicopter operating off the Lonely airstrip.

The fuel for use at all but the Lonely camp site will be flown in under the Right of Way authorization this winter. Fuel will be transported to the camps via airplane or helicopter in either 15 gallon poly containers or 55 gal steel drums, and stored on site in those containers within secondary containment. Because they are transporting fuel in containers, it's their understanding that no additional authorization for fuel transport is required. Fuel for use at the Lonely camp site (500 gallons) would be flown in by fixed wing aircraft.

B. Land Use Plan Conformance

IAP: National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska Integrated Activity Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (IAP/EIS).

Date Approved/Amended: November 2012 and associated Record of Decision dated February 2013.

The proposed action is in conformance with the IAP, even though it is not specifically provided for, because it is clearly consistent with the following IAP decision (including objectives, terms, and conditions): The stipulations and best management practices will regulate permitted activities to meet resources and use objectives and thereby mitigate impacts of those activities.

C. Compliance with NEPA:

The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 516 DM 2, Appendix 1, or 516 DM 11.9. Specifically the proposed action meets the criteria for a categorical exclusion under 516 DM 11.9, BLM H-1790-1 National Environmental Policy Act Handbook Appendix 4 (F-10) BLM Categorical Exclusions.

“Nondestructive data collection, inventory (including field, aerial, and satellite surveying and mapping), study, research, and monitoring activities.”

The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 516 DM 2, Appendix 1, or 516 DM 11.9. Specifically the proposed action meets the criteria for a categorical exclusion under 516 DM 11.9, BLM H-1790-1 National Environmental Policy Act Handbook Appendix 4 (F-10) BLM Categorical Exclusions.

This categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects that may significantly affect the environment. The proposed action has been reviewed, and none of the extraordinary circumstances described in 516 DM 2 apply.

Extraordinary Circumstances	Yes	No
2.1 Have significant impacts on public health or safety.		X
2.2 Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands (Executive Order 11990); floodplains (Executive Order 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas.		X
2.3 Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA Section 102(2) (E)].		X
2.4 Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.		X
2.5 Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.		X
2.6 Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.		X
2.7 Have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places as determined by either the bureau or office.		X
2.8 Have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species.		X
2.9 Violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.		X
2.10 Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898).		X
2.11 Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (Executive Order 13007).		X
2.12 Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act and Executive Order 13112).		X

Recommendation: I have found that the proposed action is compatible with the LUP, and is an action that can be categorically excluded. The Proposed Action does not trigger any of the Extraordinary Circumstances found in 516 DM Chapter 2, Appendix 2. I recommend that the Proposed Action be allowed and that an Environmental Assessment of Environmental Impact Statement is not needed.

D. Approval and Contact Information

/s/Linda Demientieff
Realty Specialist, Arctic Field Office

May 20, 2013

Contact Person

Linda Demientieff
Arctic Field Office

1150 University Avenue
Fairbanks, Alaska 99709
Phone: 907-474-2307
Email: ldementieff@blm.gov